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03/20/ DISSEM PER OPA #2 SECRET FRP: , , , , , , , ,

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TOT: 08[redacted] NOV 79

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LATIN AMERICA BRIEF [redacted] FOR 7 NOVEMBER 1979.

[redacted]

1. BOLIVIA: SITUATION REPORT.

[redacted]

1. BOLIVIA: COLONEL NATUSCH APPEARS TO HAVE DECIDED THAT SEVERE REPRESSION OFFERS THE BEST CHANCE TO CONSOLIDATE HIS HOLD ON POWER. HE HAS THE BACKING OF CONSERVATIVE COLONELS AND LOWER RANKING MILITARY OFFICERS. [redacted]

//NATUSCH HAS HARDENED HIS OPPOSITION TO A SETTLEMENT PROPOSED BY MODERATE CHURCH AND POLITICAL LEADERS. HE TOLD LEGISLATORS THAT HE DOES NOT INTEND TO RESIGN OR TURN THE GOVERNMENT OVER TO WHAT HE LATER DESCRIBED AS "PREDATORY TERRORISTS"--PRESUMABLY THE CONGRESS. THE

SECRET

[redacted]

Approved for Release
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LEGISLATORS WERE MEETING WITH NATUSCH TO TRY TO FIND AN ACCEPTABLE WAY TO FILL OUT THE REMAINDER OF DEPOSED PRESIDENT GUEVARA'S TERM AND PROVIDE FOR DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT AFTER ELECTIONS.//

SOLDIERS CONTINUE TO PATROL LA PAZ; ARMORED CARS AND MACHINEGUN NESTS ARE EMPLACED AT STRATEGIC INTERSECTIONS. THE MILITARY HAS EXTENDED ITS CONTROL INTO RESIDENTIAL AREAS OF LA PAZ AND IS BEING SUPPORTED BY SOME ARMED CIVILIANS WHO ARE HELPING TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC ORDER.

//THE GENERAL STRIKE HAS BEEN EXTENDED INDEFINITELY, BUT THE BOLIVIAN LABOR CENTRAL MAY NOT BE ABLE TO KEEP WORKERS OFF THE JOB MUCH LONGER.//

NATUSCH HAS ORDERED MILITARY UNITS TO SHOOT THE CHIEF OF THE BOLIVIAN LABOR CENTRAL, JUAN LECHIN, ON SIGHT. THE ASSASSINATION--APPARENTLY ALREADY UNSUCCESSFULLY ATTEMPTED--WOULD PLUNGE THE COUNTRY EVEN MORE INTO VIOLENCE. IN ADDITION, THE REGIME IS ARRESTING ALL LABOR LEADERS IT CAN FIND, FORCING THE REMAINDER TO GO UNDERGROUND.

//NATUSCH HAS ALSO ORDERED THE ARREST OF GUEVARA, WHO IS NOW IN HIDING, AND A ROUNDUP OF MEMBERS OF THE LEFTIST REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT. THIS ACTION PROBABLY PRESAGES NATIONWIDE ARRESTS OF OTHER POLITICAL LEADERS.//

IN VIEW OF THE CONTINUING PROBLEMS IN THE LA PAZ AREA, THE US EMBASSY ON TUESDAY TRANSPORTED ALL 97 AVAILABLE NONRESIDENT US CITIZENS TO LA PAZ' AIRPORT. THEY PROBABLY WILL BE EVACUATED BY US MILITARY AIRCRAFT FLYING IN FROM LIMA ON WEDNESDAY, AS FEW COMMERCIAN FLIGHTS HAVE BEEN MADE. THE EMBASSY NOTED "SOME SPORADIC GUNFIRE" IN THE VICINITY OF THE AIRPORT LAST NIGHT BUT REGARDED SECURITY AS "ADEQUATE" THERE.

PERU'S FOREIGN MINISTRY HAS ANNOUNCED THAT FOREIGN MINISTERS OF THE OTHER ANDEAN PACT STATES-COLOMBIA, ECUADOR, PERU, AND VENEZUELA-WILL MEET FRIDAY IN LIMA TO DISCUSS "THE BOLIVIAN SOCIOPOLITICAL SITUATION." THE DATE HAS BEEN ADVANCED BY ONE DAY FROM THE ORIGINAL SCHEDULE.

AND THE MEETING HAS BEEN GIVEN A FOCUS RATHER THAN THE USUAL BROAD AGENDA. [redacted]